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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**VETERANS ADMINISTRATION LAWYER SENTENCED
FOR DEATH OF D.C. POLICE OFFICER**

GREENBELT, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced that today U.S. District Court Judge Richard D. Bennett sentenced Michael Smalls, age 40, of District Heights, Maryland to 5 years in prison followed by 3 years of supervised release in connection with Smalls' guilty plea to one count of involuntary manslaughter and related misdemeanors in the April 16, 2003 death of District of Columbia Police Detective Eugene Lonon, and to drunk driving and another traffic offense in an unrelated incident that occurred in the same general area on January 27, 2003. Smalls was also ordered to pay fines totaling \$80,000 and restitution in the amount of \$5,651.41 to a woman whose car was burned up in the crash.

In a statement of facts provided to the court as part of the plea agreement entered on September 9, 2003, Smalls, a lawyer with the Veterans Administration, admitted that his blood alcohol level was .23-- nearly three times the legal limit when he struck Detective Lonon's stopped car at a traffic light on Suitland Parkway at Naylor Road at about 5:40 a.m. To reach that blood-alcohol level, Smalls would have had to consume at least 15 to 16 ordinary alcoholic drinks,

according to a toxicology expert. U.S. Park Police estimated that Smalls was traveling at least 78 miles per hour as he approached the red light in the posted 45 mile-per-hour zone. Detective Lonon's car, with his body inside, struck a second vehicle causing that vehicle to catch fire. Detective Lonon's neck was broken in the initial collision. The driver of the second vehicle managed to get out before her car exploded.

Smalls had also pled guilty to drunk driving and another traffic offense in an unrelated incident that occurred in the same general area on January 27, 2003. According to the statement of facts, Smalls agreed that his blood-alcohol level was .19 at the time of his January 27 arrest for drunk driving on Suitland Parkway near Silver Hill Road. The U.S. Park Police were looking for Small's car that night after receiving reports from motorists that he had almost caused several accidents. Smalls was apprehended while driving well under the posted speed limit, interfering with other traffic and weaving.

At the time Detective Lonon was killed on April 16, Smalls was awaiting his initial appearance in the U.S. District Court on the January 27 arrest.

The case is a result of an investigation by the U.S. Park Police. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Hollis R. Weisman.